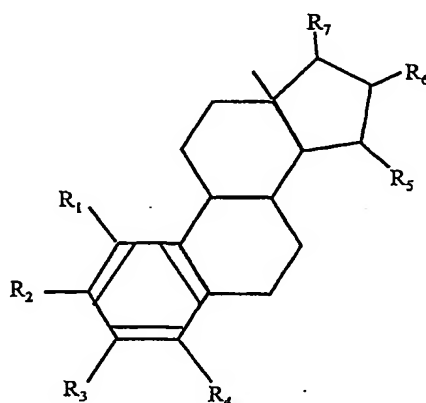


## CLAIMS

1. A cosmetic method of treating human skin by delivering an estrogenic component to said skin, the method comprising applying to the skin a composition containing:

- 5 (i) at least 5  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of an estrogenic component selected from the group consisting of: substances represented by the following formula



in which formula  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ ,  $R_4$  independently are a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group or an alkoxy group with 1-5 carbon atoms; each of  $R_5$ ,  $R_6$ ,  $R_7$  is a hydroxyl group; no more than 3 of

- 10  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ ,  $R_4$  are hydrogen atoms;

precursors capable of liberating a substance according to the aforementioned formula when used in the present method; and

mixtures of one or more of the aforementioned substances and/or precursors; and

- (ii) a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

15

2. Use according to claim 1, wherein  $R_3$  represents a hydroxyl group or an alkoxy group.

3. Use according to claim 1 or 2, wherein at least 3 of the groups  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  represent hydrogen atoms.

20

4. Use according to any one of claims 1-3, wherein the precursors are derivatives of the estrogenic substances wherein the hydrogen atom of at least one of the hydroxyl groups has been substituted by an acyl radical of a hydrocarbon carboxylic, sulfonic acid or sulfamic acid

of 1-25 carbon atoms; tetrahydrofuranyl; tetrahydropyranal; or a straight or branched chain glycosydic residue containing 1-20 glycosidic units per residue.

- 5 5. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-4, wherein the composition is applied in an effective amount to enhance proliferation of fibroblasts and/or epidermal skin cells.
6. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-5, wherein the composition is applied in an effective amount to improve skin thickness and/or skin elasticity.
- 10 7. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-6, wherein the composition is applied in an effective amount to improve or prevent the condition of wrinkled, lined, dry, flaky, aged or photodamaged skin.
- 15 8. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-7, wherein the composition contains at least 10  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of the estrogenic component, preferably between 50  $\mu\text{g/g}$  and 50 mg/g of the estrogenic component.
9. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-8, wherein the composition is applied to facial skin or skin of the neck.
- 20 10. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-9, wherein the composition is applied at least once a day during a period of at least 3 days.
- 25 11. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-10, wherein virtually all of the composition that has been applied to the skin, is allowed to penetrate said skin.
12. Use of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1 in the manufacture of a composition for use in a method of treating or preventing vaginal dryness, wherein the method comprises applying to the vaginal epithelium a composition containing:
- 30 (i) at least 5  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of said estrogenic component; and  
(ii) a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

13. Use of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1 in the manufacture of a composition for use in a method of promoting wound healing, wherein the method comprises applying to the wounded tissue or to tissue in the vicinity of the wound a composition containing:

- (i) at least 5  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of said estrogenic component; and
- 5 (ii) a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

14. Use of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1 in the manufacture of a composition for use in a method of treating or preventing acne, wherein the method comprises applying to the skin that is affected by acne or that is at risk of being affected by acne a composition

10 containing:

- (i) at least 5  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of said estrogenic component; and
- (ii) a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

15. A skin care composition for topical administration containing:

- 15 (i) at least 5  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1; and
- (ii) a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

16. The skin care composition according to claim 15, which composition is a lotion, salve or a cream.

20